

## Concordia Day Care and Community Center

Concordia Welfare & Education Foundation - Thailand continues helping the vulnerable population who live in Bangna community and have low income, especially children, parents, the elderly and handicapped who are affected by the spread of Covid-19, which causes them to have lower income, lose jobs, become infected and have to quarantine instead of working.

As the Omicron variant spreads more easily, Thailand now has about 50,000 new cases per day. More than 60% of people who live in Bangna community and nearby are infected, along with small children who are mostly asymptomatic. This makes our staff high risk, so we must be more careful. Our focus is to work with families and children directly, and thankfully, the government agency has not instructed us to close the daycare at this time. Therefore, Concordia Center can be open every day to help vulnerable children and their families in person.

The Foundation would like to thank you and every sponsor and agency who helped and supported us with food, materials, medicine and medical supplies. We distributed to the children and their families, including people who live around the community to relieve their troubles and encourage them to face the Covid-19 epidemic situation.



### Problem Scenario

During January – March of 2022, the sixth wave of Covid-19 and the Omicron variant hit Thailand. Daily cases rose to around 30,000 – 50,000 per day. It started spreading into Bangna community and other communities which the Foundation works with. Most of the small children contracted Covid from their parent or guardian but had mild symptoms. Nevertheless, they were required to self-isolate for 10 days,

along with their family members. The local health workers would confirm the result with an at home ATK test before doing the registration, then proceed with medication delivery according to their symptoms. Because the community is small and crowded, the outbreak occurred and spread quickly, affecting around 60% of community members.



Public Health Officer visited the staff who contacted infected children. 7-day-self quarantine was required.

## Effects

Concordia Daycare had 25 infected persons - small children and children in the Saturday Project—and 1 infected staff. This long period of Covid-19 crisis has affected the financial status of our children's parents who regularly have low income. The parent or guardian could not bear the higher living cost, though they got support from Concordia Daycare whenever we could. Their income was still not sufficient. Some of them had to move back to their hometown and different work. If they not successful, they may move back to the city to try again.

In the last 2 years, nurseries, including Concordia Daycare, were closed by the Government measures, to prevent the local transmission of Covid-19. Many children had to be at home. They were not supported with food and nutrition and normal child development. It affected everything from nutrition, intelligence, emotions, and social skills. Some children were born by unplanned pregnancy. Because of the poverty, family problems, lack of education and having no essential nutrients, many children were unhealthy and sick often, had developmental delays, physical and/or intellectual disabilities, or special needs. Despite their needs, they were never able to have health checks or see a doctor. Throughout the

spread of Covid-19, there were many children that came to Concordia Daycare because no other place opened for the children who came from the overcrowded community. Families had very low income and weren't able to send their children to any other center, or away to get medical care.

Concordia Daycare was contacted by the Department of Health in Bangkok for the coordination of visiting, surveying, and evaluating health and development of children in the community. As a result, we found out that many children in the Covid-19 period had slow development: weak fine motor and gross motor skills, immaturity, and inability to help themselves in daily life. Some needed to see a doctor for additional analysis of symptoms and family problems. The Foundation would like to thank the Department of Health for realizing the importance of the coordination with the private sector in to support the children' health until they pass the criteria of developmental assessment. Thank you for not announcing to close the nursery as before. Therefore, Concordia Daycare can regularly operate and develop the quality of children's lives. Though our staff are at a high risk continually working with the children, our team is ready to manage each case. According to government measures, the staff have to do an at home ATK test every week. In addition, parents, and anyone in close contact with the children must show weekly results of at home ATK tests to Concordia staff to reduce the risk.



### Assistance

Nowadays, Concordia Daycare is open every day to assist children and their families who are struggling to earn a living and need a daycare service. There are about 18-24 children per day at Concordia Daycare, which means that the children will have a safe place during the day, with meals and appropriate childhood development according to their age. They also will not be at risk of infection or road accident. Concordia Daycare is ready to assist in medicine, medical supplies, milk, and nonperishable food for up to



a total of 23 infected families during home isolation. Moreover, we have ATK test services for the children and family who are at high risk.

**Breakfast Project Development** Over a period of the Covid-19 economic crisis, our team found out that there were many children who did not have breakfast at home, affecting their growth and development. They were sleepy and lethargic. Therefore, we added a breakfast meal in addition to lunch and snack with 2 boxes of milk for each meal that we normally provide. We focused on nutrition promotion, with all of the food groups e.g., meat, vegetable, fruit. The children are trained to try a variety of vegetables and fruits, outdoor exercise, sport and using more playground equipment in order to enhance their immunity and reduce sickness, because medical fees can be an expensive expense.



**Kitchenware Delivery** Concordia International School gave kitchenware and sewing machines to Concordia Daycare to deliver to the children's mothers who lost their jobs and would like to start the new career. These enable them to sell cooked-to-order dishes or offer at-home sewing services. Concordia Daycare has now delivered kitchenware to a total of 7 families.



**Special Activities** On Saturday 5 and 12 February 2022, Concordia Daycare set special activities for small children and older children who were under school holiday project and the Saturday project, respectively.

The children could meet their friends, relieve their loneliness, have fun, celebrate Easter day, make cards, play games, watch movies and have a meal together. Learning the meaning of Easter day and making thank you cards for their sponsors was also included.



### Coordination with State Agency

- Concordia Daycare sent 6 staff to attend an online training course “Promoting Child Development by age for more efficiency”, organized by Department of Children and Youth Ministry, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security during 14-16 January 2022.
- Concordia Daycare submitted required documents to government agencies asking for support – 2,000 Baht per family - to relieve the problems of children and family who were under Concordia Daycare and lost their jobs because of the Covid-19 crisis. Fourteen families have been supported.



**Place Adjustment** As the playground area has strong sunlight the whole day, a sunshade was installed. The children can now use the outside area more often for their muscle and physical strength development to fight sickness. A private company was also hired to clean and disinfect the daycare and equipment once a month. Tables, chairs and computers were bought, and classrooms were renovated to support the students who did not have internet or computer at home. They can now use the daycare for their online study, and we have teachers or volunteers to assist them.



#### The successfulness of Concordia alumni

Concordia Daycare would like to congratulate Noei and her family. The twin, Nun and Noei live in Bangna (under expressway community). Their father is a motorbike taxi driver, and their mother works at a vendor. Concordia took care of Nun and Noei since they were 3 years old. When they were 6 years old, they went to Wat Banna Nai primary school. However, they still came to Concordia for school holiday projects and Saturday school. They continuously joined our activities e.g., elderly visits and item distribution. They liked performance and spoke English to our volunteers. During school holidays, they would ask for science experiments, camping, field trips, mathematics and English study.



Their family worked hard to support Nun and Noei in their education. Both were very determined to study. When they were sick or had a family problem, they would consult with our team. During the Covid epidemic, everyone in the family became infected. Nun and Noei asked Concordia for help, and we supported them with medicine, medical supplies and food.



Thank you to God for the long relationship - more than 20 years - between students and teachers. Concordia has been giving knowledge, assistance, care and maintaining the relationship through the years. We share happiness and suffering with the children. In addition, we provide scholarships and give opportunities to train the children for necessary skills for their lives. Eventually, we see the successfulness of Noei, one of our students from Concordia project.

“Teacher, I have graduated with a Tourism degree. I am so glad that I will be able to help you and volunteers travel. I am very glad that I will have the chance to use English skills that teacher Christie and teacher Claire taught me until I passed the examination. I am now being trained to be a guide.”

Concordia Welfare & Education Foundation would like to thank the teachers, volunteers and all sponsors who trust us and donate things and time and financial support so that Concordia can be a blessing to many children in vulnerable populations. The children are given the opportunity to practice, gain knowledge, receive care and advice until days like today when one of them has overcome the obstacles and obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Tourism as she had dreamed.



To Noei: may God continue His blessings in your life so that you can be a light to your family. May God lead your family out of trouble and help your family through any financial struggles. May God use you to encourage others to overcome the obstacles until they are successful like you!